

Driving while taking medication

Guidance for people who are taking medications that could impair or affect their ability to drive safely.



Medications can affect people in different ways. Many medications prescribed or bought over the counter may affect your ability to drive.

The law says you should not drive a vehicle if you feel sleepy or unable to concentrate due to the influence of any medicines, whether prescribed or not.

The law states that it is illegal to drive when certain drugs are above specified levels in the body. It applies to strong painkillers and other medications which you may be prescribed for control of your symptoms.

You are allowed to continue to drive if your driving ability is not affected, and you are taking the medicines as prescribed.

Key points to remember

- All medication comes with an information leaflet that describes how the medication may affect driving ability.
- You should continue taking your medication as prescribed.
- If you feel impaired in any way, you must not drive.

What will happen if the police stop me?

If the police stop you because they think your driving is impaired, and they suspect you are under the influence of drugs, they can test for this.

The police have access to a drug test kit which can detect drugs in your system. A further blood test at the police station can identify the type and level of drugs in your body.

If you are found to be driving impaired with these medicines above the legal limits in your body, you could be guilty of breaking the law.

The law provides you with a 'medical defence'. This states that you are not guilty if:

- Your driving is not impaired.
- The medicine was prescribed, supplied or sold to you to treat a medical or dental problem.
- You took the medicine according to the instructions given by the prescriber or the information provided with the medicine.

If your driving is impaired, even if the medicine is prescribed, you are guilty of breaking the law.

Do not drive if you feel drowsy, dizzy, unable to concentrate or make decisions, or if you have blurred or double vision.

What you should do if you are taking any medicines that may impair your ability to drive:

- Keep on taking the medication in the way it was prescribed.
- Check the patient information leaflet that comes with your medicine for advice about how your medicine may affect your driving ability.
- Do not drive when starting a new medicine or increasing the dose, until you know how it affects you.
- Do not drive if you feel drowsy, dizzy, unable to concentrate or make decisions or if you have blurred or double vision.
- Consider your ability to drive before every journey.
- Carry information about your medicines with you so this can be provided to the police if needed.
- Talk to your doctor or nurse if you are worried.
- Do not suddenly stop taking medications as this may be harmful.
- If your doctor tells you not to drive for any reason, you should inform the DVLA and your insurance company.

For more information on the law visit:
www.gov.uk/government/collections/drug-driving

